1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

133 alkaline plains and approaches the marshy lakes that are abundantly
137 present in the rainy season and frequently absent in the dry period. The acacia and the eucalyptus are familiar and frequent in both the low and the high lands, and spear grass covers the land in dense growths during the months of rain.

136 The animals, with certain minor variations, are the usual marsupials and monotremes found in Australia, with the bat and wild domestic dog the only mammalia living in the region. Nature is bountiful with
[262] many varieties of birds, fish, and other animals; but vegetable foods, although plentiful, are limited in variety.

144 The Murngin people belong to the aboriginal Australoid race found throughout Australia—not Mongoloid, Negroid, or Caucasian, but a variant group which seems to be a blend of many of the features of the
[197] white and black races.[2] Their language is one of the Australo-Dravidian linguistic group. They belong to a Stone Age culture; were they placed
105 in our own chronology, their technological development would fall somewhere between the Old and the New Stone Ages.

The Murngin civilization is a simple Australian culture with a small hunting and gathering population which lives off the sea and the land. The natural environment which surrounds it and drastically affects native behavior consists of *two changes which make up the yearly cycle*; one of these is extremely rainy, producing a period of scarcity, and the other a dry period when there is an abundance of food. The technology can be described briefly as the adaptive mechanisms of the general society to these two parts of the cycle of nature.

614 The social organization must be given in a more detailed description. The fundamental basis of the society is an elaborate kinship[3]
423 system in which everyone is related to everyone else. This kinship system is organized into more general units which are patrilineal,[3] exogamic[3] clans[3] which have local territories that were "given to them by the totems."[3] All parts of the clan land have totemic references. Each clan has multiple totems; all clans have at least one, possibly more, sacred water holes where live the high totems, the totemic ancestors, the ancestral dead, and the totemic spirits of the unborn. The names of all clansmen have totemic significance, and the whole general totemic pattern is related to the clan.

[101] [2] See Appendix VII.—The term "Black" in the title of this book, *A Black Civilization*, is not to be interpreted as describing these people as purely Negroid. The term refers, rather, to their popular name, "Australian Blacks," and to the name they accept for themselves from the Australian whites, "Blackfellows."

[3] See Glossary of Technical Terms, page 566.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

105 throughout the eight tribes. The horde, dealt with in the chapter on technology, and the phratry may or may not be present in a given area. The tribe is of minor importance in native life.

The Clan

614 The Murngin clan is an exogamic patrilineal group averaging forty or fifty individuals who possess a common territory which averages 423 360 square miles.[6] This group possesses one or more sacred totemic 778 water holes, formed by a creator totem, in which the whole of the tribal life is focussed; all members of the clan are born from this water hole, and all go back to it at death; in it the totem's spirits live with the mythological ancestor, the souls of the dead, and the unborn children. The male members of the clan who can be the permanent occupants of the group's land possess totemic emblems in common.

614 A clan frequently has an exclusive name for its people and another [197] preferred one that defines the language spoken by this people as different from that of all other clans. The clan is exogamous by virtue [582] of belonging to a moiety, which prevents marriage within its half of the tribe. Theoretically an individual can marry into any one of the clans in the opposite moiety. The tribal and intertribal myths of the 773 moiety which are saturated with themes expressing the local organiza- 614 tion of these people always devote small parts of their stories to the special circumstances of the creation of a clan. They also give its association with the totems and other elements of tribal life considered important by these people. The more localized myths which concern only two or three clans usually symbolize intra-clan solidarity and inter-clan antagonism. The ceremonies possessed by a clan, like the [184] totems, are ordinarily owned by other similar groups belonging to the same moiety, although local variations in totem and ceremony occur.

614 The following relatives are always found in a clan: marikmo[6] (father's father and father's father's sister), bapa (father), mokul bapa (father's sister), wawa (older brother), yukiyuko (younger brother), yeppa (sister), gatu (son and daughter), and maraitcha (son's son and son's daughter). In other words, these relatives are in ego's brother's

[5] For additional elements in the clan configuration see Part III.

[6] See Chart II, page 59, for the place of kinship terms in the kinship system. Native terms have been used more frequently than the author would have liked, but it was impossible always to give an exact translation in a few words. It seems better to define a word carefully at least once, and thereafter use the term. (See Glossary of Native Terms.)

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OI 17 Murngin OI 17

lineage, either as consanguine or classificatory kin. Other lines of relatives are sometimes found, but no relative from the opposite moiety ever belongs to ego's clan. The mari and kutara lines are sometimes members of ego's clan (mari, mother's mother, mother's mother's brother; kutara, sister's daughter's daughter, sister's daughter's son).

An important activity of the clan is war, the clan being the war-making group.[1] Within this group no violent conflict ever takes place, no matter how much cause is given. Members may quarrel, but for clansmen to fight one another would be considered an unnatural act in Murngin society and it never occurs. When the clan is at war the ceremonial leader almost always acts as the war leader. A clan seldom goes to battle as a group against another one, but usually has an eternal feud with certain others which results in occasional ambushes in which a man or two is killed.

The demographic aspects of Murngin society are extremely difficult to ascertain, owing to the roving life and impossibility of a head census. Genealogies showed the Kolpa (northern Wessel Island)[2] to be a group of about twenty-five relatives. The clan itself, as well as those who did not belong to it or their (the Yaernungo) tribe, considered this below the normal population level. The Liaalaomir (Glyde River) clan genealogies include around fifty people; the clansmen seem satisfied with their numbers, possessing a sense of well-being as a group not evident among the Kolpa. This was also true of clans like the Liagaomir (the mainland south of Howard Island) and the Daiuror (interior south of Howard Island). The Wangurri (see page 42 for location) have some sixty or seventy members in their clan. The Warumeri, to their north, now have about forty people, since the last generation suffered a severe loss through a disastrous fight with the Wangurri over the right to certain women.

The Yalukal and Barlmawi at the present time have only one male member each. It is highly likely that such clans will disappear, continuance being dependent upon the male line. The land will continue to belong to the dead clan until in several generations the memory of it is lost and new traditions have filled the thought of the natives. The land and water holes will then belong to another group which will have been occupying it since the demise of its former owners. The

[1] The statement that the clan is a war-making group needs further elaboration and amendments which are given in Chapter VI.

[2] See map, page 40, and list of clans, pages 39-51.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

writer recorded statements from some younger men that certain territory belonged to the people now living upon it, while a few old men said this land really belonged to an older group that had died out. Once these old men are dead, it is likely that all memory of the ownership by a former clan will be gone.

Clan territory always has as a central core the land surrounding the water hole. Near the water hole the camps are usually made. Unless a river, lake, or other body of water defines it, no exact boundary exists between two clans. Usually a river or lake is occupied by one clan and the barren plains between form the outer limits for it and its neighbors. When one traverses a dry, unproductive part of the country, those parts of it near billibong (Australian white term: small lake or pool), lily places, and water locations are known to all peoples to belong to a definite clan; but as one moves across the dry plains toward the water hole of another group, there is considerable doubt as to which clan owns the plains area. No native would bother himself about it; it is looked upon as without significance in the lives of the people.

The land along the sea, the bays, inlets and tidal rivers, however, has very definite boundaries, well known to all peoples. Usually myths or folk tales record the facts of territorial ownership in the tribal tradition. The land of the clan is not always contiguous but may be separated by a distance of twenty or thirty miles. The home of a clan, however, is usually one continuous tract. The Gwiyamil, situated in the interior on Buckingham River, possess a small island in Caddell Straits between Elcho and Howard Islands. The island, piled high with boulders and with one wind-blown tree, cannot be more than 200 feet in diameter. Its natural geographic affinities are with Elcho Island, but it is "owned" by this inland clan. The Murngin say that Garrawark, a creator totemic fish, dived underground from the Gwiyamil well in the interior and came up at this island, made it, and called it Gwiyamil country. Garrawark also made other clan countries, but he did not call them Gwiyamil, which exposes the rationalization in this answer. A guess, based on similar types of association among the Murngin, is that some peculiarity in the country and the island associated the two places in their minds. The Milyingi, Djirin, Warumeri, Marungun and other clans all have additional territory away from their clan home and water holes.

No land can be taken from a clan by an act of war. A clan does not possess its land by strength of arms but by immemorial tradition

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

and as an integral part of the culture. Murngin myth dies hard, and ownership of land is in Murngin myth even after the final destruction of a particular clan. It would never occur to a victorious group to annex another's territory, even though the entire male population were destroyed and the dead men's women and children taken by the victors. In the passage of time the clan using it would absorb it into their own territory and the myth would unconsciously change to express this. In the thought of the Murngin, land and water, people and clan are an act of the creator totem and the mythological ancestors, who always announce in myth and ceremony that this is the country of such and such a clan; to expropriate this land as a conscious act would be impossible. Just as the totem, the creator, and the members are a permanent and inextricable part of the culture, so is the clan's ownership of the land. This will become clearer when the concepts of birth, death, and totem are associated, and the sacred wells of the clans considered.

The forty or fifty-odd people who belong to a clan do not all live in the land of the clan. All sisters and daughters, since the rule of marriage is patrilocal after the first year or two, go to their husband's clan to live and rear their families. This means that fully half of the members of the clan live after the age of puberty with a group belonging to the opposite moiety. On the other hand, the wives of the clansmen have come from clans of the opposite moiety and make up the difference in population caused by the loss of the group's own females.

Friendly clans always live together during the seasons when food is plentiful in certain area. When the turtles of Buckingham Bay are laying hundreds of eggs nightly along the Djirin coast, the Birkili and Wangurri may be found there. When the cycad palm nuts are ready for picking on Millingimbi Island, the surrounding clans gather for the period of plenty. This is done as a right, no invitation being necessary and no one questioning this right as long as peace reigns. Let there be trouble and cause for a possible killing, and the visitors return to their own land, even though their visit has taken on the nature of a permanent residence.

The most important unifying concept in the whole of clan ideology is that of the sacred water hole in which reposes the spiritual unity of clan life. It is the fundamental symbol of clan solidarity. From it come all the eternal qualities, and to it those qualities return when they have been lived or used by members of the clan. Water, in Murngin thought, is one of the most important symbols of spiritual life.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

283 of the red-breasted parrot can be used for certain totemic emblems.
237 To collect a sufficient supply of red feathers to put on such totems as
431 their fire, woman and other Dua moiety totemic emblems demands considerable industry not only on the part of the totem makers in their daily hunting and robbings of birds' nests but also in gift exchanges. This means that red ocher and other body paints, spear heads from the interior, carved wooden spears from the coastal belt, and other objects of economic value must be had to trade. Small white feathers from hawks' breasts and from the sulphur-crested cockatoo and the blue-eyed corella are also used for the string of many totems. The larger feathers of the cockatoos and the yellow crest of the sulphur-crested cockatoo are used for the great ritual headdresses made by the [314] men with the aid of adhesive gathered from the ironwood tree and the honeybee's hive. Ironwood resin makes a very hard, durable cement and is used for many purposes for which the beeswax is too malleable. [237] Ordinarily the beeswax is preferred for the molding of head pieces because the proper shapes can be more easily obtained.

431 Obviously the extension of the kinship personality of a man by the exchange of gifts between far-off relatives or the strengthening of the 602 bonds between near kin such as mari and kutara definitely stimulates economic enterprise. More labor is necessary than if these mechanisms were not present. The goods themselves take on higher value from [178] their use in the totemic ceremonies; the totemic strings absorb some of the clan ceremonial power and, once used, are taboo to the uninitiated. They are of course valuable in another ritual since they will be used by the receiver for his own totemic emblem and then be passed on to other reciprocating relatives.

4. *Property*

● 423 Relating Murngin technological articles to human beings by the concept of ownership is one of the methods of controlling and regulating this society's adaptation to the natural environment, since it incorporates the various articles of technology into the general social order. The Murngin concepts of property are developed into a variety of forms according to the type of thing owned. Land is divided among [614] the clans; and definite areas and their natural objects such as trees, water holes, and the like are considered as belonging to these exogamic units. Derivatively the moieties are also supposed to have an "owning" 423 relationship to the land areas of the country. This means that not only 616 are spatial divisions organized by the separation of all things on the

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

basis of their inherent nature of being Dua or Yiritja, but that the moiety grouping of things takes on spatial definitions and specific location. The importance of the intertwining of these two concepts can be seen in the larger myths such as Wawilak, Djunkgao, Barnumbir, which reflect their division of the things of nature and culture into two moiety categories and group the objects of nature accordingly because they are the property of the clans. The clans are thought of as owning their totems and the right to certain minute variations of the ritual. The ownership of the land includes the use of it, but there would be no thought of excluding the members of other clans from using it; rather, mutual use would be encouraged if the two groups were friendly.

The objects of the technology are personally owned, but a number of brothers and fathers and sons who have cooperated in an enterprise such as boat building have a feeling of collective ownership (see pages 63, 70).

The concept of incorporeal property is not very highly developed. A man's name is his own, but other members of his clan could possess it if their parents or grandparents who named them had wished it so. There are no songs or painting designs, curing or killing magics, which are considered, as elsewhere, the property of any one individual or group. Certain totemic designs are associated with clans or moieties, and it would be impossible for members of the other clans or moiety to use these designs or emblems unless given permission under special circumstances; but these as well as totems and rituals are not so much properties in an economic sense as integral parts of the structure of the clan. To a great degree this is also true of the land. To remove these incorporeal elements from the clan and moiety structures would cause a complete reorganization of those structures, and only in a most secondary and derivative sense can they be thought of as in an economic category; yet the effect of their being part of the clan and moiety configuration has many of the attributes of our concept of property.

The Murngins' undeveloped sense of property seems to be associated with their lack of interest in developing their technological equipment, and both of these social elements seem to root in the desire to be free from the burdens and responsibilities of objects which would interfere with the society's itinerant existence. The equivalents of incorporeal property in other tribes are here felt to be part of the clan or moiety, i.e., not objects for the exclusive use of any one individual group to dispose of as it saw fit. The medicine man's magical ritual

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

in the general topography of northeastern Arnhem Land. The clan structure is not a mere exogamic group which occupies a certain extended territory and whose people earn their living from this area. In the first place, all its female members are usually not attached to the land itself, for after reaching early adolescence they go as wives and potential mothers to other clans than their own; the wives and mothers of the local clan come from other areas and are therefore not thought of as belonging to this particular piece of land. Spatial unity is disrupted and the Murngin clan is seen to be an entirely different social entity from our modern state. Further, the economic unit of this people is not the clan but the horde.

The horde's membership is composed of men from a number of clans as well as of women from different groups. The clan composition of a horde becomes more heterogeneous during the dry season when an area can support a larger number of people, than in the rainy season when food is scarce. The male membership of the clan is seldom spatially intact except during the ritual season when all of the male members are more likely to be present than in the rainy period. The clan's so-called "ownership" of the land has little of the economic about it. Friendly peoples wander over the food areas of others and, if their area happens to be poor in food production, possibly spend more of their lives on the territory of other clans than on their own. Exclusive use of the group's territory by the group is not a part of the Murngin idea of land "ownership." The ownership of the land is more in the "nature of things," as seen by the Murngin. The land is not outside the clan but is an integral part of it. As has been said, it cannot be taken from the clan, for it is of the clan and made such by the order of existence. "Wongar made it that way and that's why we have these things today."

Politically the clan is almost impotent when it comes to positive action. It is impossible to obtain group action, even for the wergild, which will function to the extent that discipline can be enforced and individual action prohibited in a blood feud. The ceremonial leader is considered head man, and if physically able and of sufficient talent, he is also war leader, but his power is at an absolute minimum except as a ritual leader; it is in the field of ritual and not of government that he exercises his leadership.

The names of the country, the names of the wells, and the list of totems as well as the names of the mythological ancestors all form fundamental parts of the clan unity. All of the names of the clan

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

heavy grass-fiber string. A slight cut is made across the inner surface of the canoe at stern and bow, to enable the builder to bend the ends to sharp points so that they can be properly sewn together. 396

Two pliable green poles are put along the gunwales and lashed to them with grass fiber to strengthen the craft. Four cross-pieces are inserted to keep the sides from collapsing. The sides are pulled together with bark string rope; this prevents their spreading and spoiling the shape of the canoe. The whole structure takes a short time to make; no manufactured material is needed, since the string is only a tough grass that has been split.

The bark canoe was used before the dugout for hunting turtle and sea animals, but now is never used for a harpooning expedition.

Dugout Canoe.—The material for a dugout canoe is always a soft wood. The larger paper barks (Melaleuca) and certain types of the fig tree, as well as other trees with large trunks and soft wood, are used. All of these trees are very scarce in northeastern Arnhem Land and are highly prized by the natives. They always belong to a clan, since they are a part of a clan's territory. [423]

A dugout canoe ranges from twelve to twenty-six feet in length and has a beam of two to three feet. The average length of a canoe is eighteen feet. An ordinary canoe will seat from four to fourteen people. The seats are so arranged that two men sit side by side. Projections are left on the inner sides of the canoes and flat slabs of hard wood are put across to form the seats. One such board has a hole bored in it for the mast. A raised place is also left in the bottom of the boat, in which a socket is made for the mast end.

Sails of pandanus (see page 461) and paddles are used by the natives to propel the dugout canoe. A paddle is also used for a rudder. A three-ply rope with a stone attached to it is tied to a hole bored in the stern of the boat and used for an anchor. The stone also serves as ballast. Bailers are made of melon shells.

The major part of the work on a canoe is done on the spot where the tree has been felled. The chief tool is now the iron tomahawk instead of the stone axe—in fact, it is doubtful if the stone axe is ever used for making dugout canoes, since these canoes are a Malay contribution, and in all likelihood the Murngin learned how to make the dugout under the supervision of the Malays, who were using iron axes and who introduced this tool among the Murngin.

The boat is roughly shaped for hollowing out and is then carried by a group of men to a nearby stream. It is placed in the water to test its equilibrium and to balance it finally. Water is poured inside it until it is thoroughly soaked; then a fire is made in it so that the whole surface is charred and thoroughly steamed. The outside of the boat is also fired and slightly charred. After steaming, planks are put inside to push the two sides farther apart and thereby widen the beam.

2: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1955
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This corporate unilineal descent group tends to be the smallest unit outside EGO's direct descent line, the composition of which I have mentioned above. This is the *baburu*. It is corporate—the body politic—because its male members will always act together, particularly in ritual observances: it may be distinguished from other linked *baburu*, forming the linguistic group, when such ceremonies are in progress. However closely linked these individual *baburu* may be, they are considered sectionally in one sense as separate entities. Each *baburu* is entitled to contribute its own sacred emblems (which may be of the same patterning as the other linked *baburu* within the linguistic group), and to modify and elaborate designs as it desires. Each *baburu*, among other things, will contribute sacred communal cycad nut "bread." 613

All male members of a *baburu* will engage in hunting together, but in this context they are the corporate group *plus*—and this plus will include their wives, so that they hunt as a local horde. But when they hunt for kangaroo, male members of the *baburu* hunt together and share as one: it is the same with fishing. They are the unit which will engage in feuds and in reprisals—brothers stand with brothers, fathers with sons, parallel cousins with parallel cousins, and so on. They are both the defensive and offensive unit. They can at times be allied with parallel *baburu* for this purpose; but when this is done payments are required, whereas within the unit no payment is considered necessary in cases of emergency. 613 621 [224] [628]

In the settling of disputes—in what is known as the *mugaruda*, when the accused runs the gauntlet, his accusers throwing spears at him—it is the *baburu* as one which throws the spears, on the one hand, and, on the other, the *baburu* of the accused which reinforces him on the other side of the ground. Allied *baburu* will stand close by, but it is the single *baburu* which acts. The head of the individual *baburu* is also the jural head; he makes decisions and maintains order within the several domestic circles constituting the *baburu* and its adherents. 613 628

The *baburu* too occupies usually a particular stretch of country, but this may be ill-defined, as the linguistic group—the linked parallel *baburu*—is said to be the landholding unit. It does not own the land, but holds it in custody for past generations of ancestors and future generations. Land can never be alienated, sold, or occupied by another group. (This is an aspect which needs greater consideration.) When we say that the linguistic group occupies a certain territory, we are saying mainly that it is traditionally associated with this. It may not always be present on it. The several linked *baburu* may separate and, at certain seasons with wives of their male members, wander as local hordes over the lands of other linguistic groups: but for their ceremonies, for their burials, and for a greater part of the year, they will be located in their relevant linguistic group, the boundaries of which are fairly clearly defined and are never questioned. 613 621 423

Considering these aspects, we feel justified in calling the unilineal descent group corporate. Moreover, this is the primary unit around which the Wulamba kinship system has been assembled. 601 613

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

616 775 *532

panel *f*, are welcoming the new spirit to his future home. In the upper part of *e* the new spirit is resting quietly in his camp after the ceremony is over.

Plate 100E also deals with the journey of the *jiritja* dead to Nalkuma.

On the upper left of panel *a*, the new spirit is asking the *Wulu-wulu* for the seed pods, *gurung-guru*, of the *menin* vine (Pl. 100C), so that he can enter Nalkuma. Three female *Mokoi*, the *Wulu-wulu*,[62] are picking the seed pods to give to him. The black bird is the jungle-fowl whose call has guided the new spirit to Gurila jungle. At *d*, the new spirit and the boatman, *Kultana*, are in the *Mokoi* canoe, *Lampu*, while in the bottom is a dugong they have captured and are taking with them to Nalkuma. To the left of the canoe are two dugongs, the white cross-hatching at the tail of the lower, and above the upper one, representing their wake. Panel *b* is the sandy shore at Port Bradshaw, *c* the shallow water, and *d* the open sea.

(2) The Totemic Places and Creatures of Port Bradshaw and Cape Arnhem

423 614 *773 [616]

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, where strong patrilineal clans or *mala* have the complete ownership of certain areas, the totemic places in those clan territories belong exclusively to the moiety of the aborigines who own the land. To show the richness of the mythology associated with one particular area, but which is typical of others, I have grouped all the art objects relating to the *jiritja* myths of Port Bradshaw and Cape Arnhem in one section.

616 *773 [423]

The area around Cape Arnhem, and, so far as I could ascertain, within the harbour of Port Bradshaw, having been created by a number of *jiritja* mythical men and creatures, is owned today by *jiritja* men of the *gumaitj mata* or language group. Although the *dua* ancestors, *Djunkgao* and *Madalait*, landed on Aparina Island, at the entrance of Port Bradshaw,[63] they do not appear to have entered the harbour, but established their camp at Jelangbara, a few miles north of its entrance. Jelangbara is the property of the *dua* men of the *ritedjingu mata*.

616 *773 825 [823]

Even though most of the *jiritja* totemic beings of Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw were harmless marine creatures, several of them are still feared. For instance, in a group of submerged rocks at Daliwa, between Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw, lives the serpent, *bilumbira*.[64] Should aborigines paddle too near his home, *bilumbira* will rise to the surface and with his long teeth, tear them and their canoe to pieces. The dugong, *merinjunga*,[65] at Nangata, south of Cape Arnhem, blows up smoke and fire to destroy his enemies, while the hawksbill turtle, *kongaradji*,[66] creates heavy seas which drown those who intrude on his domain. Within Port Bradshaw are two other dangerous creatures, the devil-ray, *mulara*, and the trepang, *teripi*. The former creates huge waves, and the latter spurts up fountains of water to destroy any trespassers.

62. See carved figure, Pl. 100c.
63. See myth of *Djunkgao* and the *Baijini*, p. 273.
64. See myth of *bilumbira*, p. 351.
65. See myth of dugongs, p. 303.
66. See myth of turtle, p. 117.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

*773 *532 825 edge, those made by the mythical man as he walked to Milungwira, and those on the left, where he returned.

Plate 121A refers to the dog, *dulairuju*, and his pursuit of the rat, *nik-nik*, in the Milungwira swamp. On the top edge of the painting is a line of dog tracks. Below them are four white herons surrounded by their footprints. At *a* is a male and female dog, each holding a rat, *nik-nik*, in its mouth; the male dog, *dulairuju*, is on the left. Below is a transverse panel, *b*, of dingoes and their tracks. The central panel, *c*, is swamp grass, the home of *nik-nik*. At *d* is a panel of dingo tracks, and at *e* another panel of five dingoes. In the middle of panel *f* the rat, *nik-nik*, is hiding from the dog in the middle of a thicket of swamp grass; *g* is a line of five white herons, *balir*, and their tracks.

On Pl. 121C the bulk of the painting consists of sinuous bands (running water), joined by straight lines (ripples on the surface of the water). The rectangle in the middle of the lower panel is the swamp, Milungwira. In its upper section four cormorants (*Phalacrocorax* sp.) are chasing four fish, called *bilda*. In the panel below are more cormorants. The transverse bands indicate subsidiary swamps at Milungwira. Reading from the left, the figures on the bottom panel are: three clouds, *balda*, the mythical man, *Laitjun*, four frogs, and five logs lying in the water of the swamp.[53]

Plate 121D is another bark painting associated with the topography of Milungwira. The top cross-hatched band, *a*, is the bed of the river, Girituwi, in which there are many waterfalls and rapids. The fish-shaped design in the lower panel is a totemic rock, called Tikorora, whose bottom, according to the myth, is in the mud and whose top is in the clouds. The four short transverse lines of lozenge-shaped designs above and below Tikorora indicate whirlpools which form at its base during heavy rains.

*532 825 *773 823

The Island, Garabi

Garabi is a string of small islands outside Caledon Bay, all belonging to the *jiritja* moiety. In creation times, when the creatures were men, the islands were the home of the hump-backed whale, *morokundja*, the stingray, *bavindjinou*, the queen fish, *tinimbu*, the crocodile, *barou*, and the hawksbill turtle, *kouwaradji*. Later these mythical beings transformed themselves into creatures which still frequent Garabi and their bodies into natural features in the adjacent country. The whales are two rugged islands, part of the Garabi chain. They also went into the sky and became a section of the Milky Way,[54] near the constellation of Orion.

[723] [616] [821]

During those early times the crocodile man, *Barou*, murdered one of the stingray people. When the head man of the stingrays heard of the murder, he met and fought the crocodile, finally wounding him with the spear he now carries in his tail. This fight made everything square and established the first *makaraka*,

53. Interpretation by F. D. McCarthy.
54. See astronomical myth of Orion and the Pleiades, p. 400.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

616 with introduced or external themes. The Djanggawul and Wauwalak
[776] Spirit Beings, the guardians of the most sacred and esoteric ritual,
[773] are *dua*, while Laintjung, Baijini, Macassan and Badu mythology, ritual, songs and belief are *jiritja*.[2]

As we have said, the *mala* and *mata* belong either to one moiety
614 or to the other; but detailed topographical maps of the region
197 reveal that clan territories are very elastic, so that isolated sites relating to one moiety may exist in the clan country of the opposite
616 moiety, and so on. Further, the traditional home territory of one
[423] group may be situated elsewhere than it is to-day. This is often discovered only by analysis of clan mythology and its relationship to that of other clans, and the inclusion of linguistic groups in clans which originally were not associated with these particular *mata*. The whole study of clan and linguistic group organization is extremely complicated. We shall, however, mention several of the best known of these, in order to demonstrate their complexity: it is not necessary, for the purpose of this work, to deal with them in any detail.

Dalwongu is a *jiritja mata*, that means "Spring water flowing after
614 rain and the swamp bird, *wanba*, calling out when he sees it". It
616 belongs not only to the Nungulrulpoi (meaning "a shoal of *gunbirawi*
192 young mullet") whose alternate name is Numbiripala (meaning "those who subincise", that is, they are influenced from Rose River: *vide* the body of this work), or Malar'watjeri (i.e. "the clan of the subincision"), but to others. These particular Dalwongu are distinguished from the others by the "heavy" quality of their language. Allied to this Dalwongu *mata*, within this particular *mala*, are the Kalaulwon (meaning "the *wanba* bird in the bamboo tree") and Mararba (that is, "the *wanba* bird") *mata*, who belong also to other *mala* and not only to the Nungulrulpoi. The alternate term for the *mala*, Malar'watjeri, is used also as a separate *mala*, and its *mata* are Dalwongu, Bilmalandji ("paperbark near the salt water") and Di:agoi (meaning "paperbark"): this Dalwongu group is allied to the first, and to the other *mata* which are rightfully Malar'watjeri.

Another Dalwongu group belongs to the Ngelkala *mala* (meaning

[113] 2. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, Sacred Figures of Ancestral Beings of Arnhem Land, *Oceania*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, pp. 309–326, 2 plates and text figures; Secular Figures of North-Eastern Arnhem Land, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 51, No. 2; R. Berndt, A Wonguri-Mandjikai Song Cycle of the Moon Bone, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, pp. 16–50; Badu, Islands of the Spirits, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, pp. 93–103, plate; C. Berndt, Expressions of Grief Among Aboriginal Women, *Oceania*, Vol. XX, No. 4, pp. 286–332; R. and C. Berndt, Discovery of Pottery in North-Eastern Arnhem Land, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVII, Part 2; A. P. Elkin, R. and C. Berndt, *Art in Arnhem Land*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, and University of Chicago Press, 1950; R. Berndt, *Djanggawul*, for publication (a detailed study of the Djanggawul religious cult of north-eastern Arnhem Land); R. Berndt, *Daughters of the Sun* (a further study of the Djanggawul cult from the north-central Arnhem Land point of view), for publication; R. and C. Berndt, *Arnhem Land, Its History and Its People* (F. W. Cheshire, for publication); R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land* (sexual behaviour in north-eastern Arnhem Land), volume for publication.

tensity of their relationship, gauged by the degree of totemic inheritance. But these groups are certainly not tribes.[9]

The clan, or in practice its occupational group, the horde (*vide infra* p. 12), is the most important unit of social life in Arnhem Land. The clan is the territorial or land-owning group, but the horde is the war-making group, and each horde is to a large extent independent and self-governing. Anything approaching kingship or chieftainship is unknown in Arnhem Land. Law, order and discipline is laid down by tradition. It is defined in the mythology, and in the sagas of the culture heroes, and is maintained by public opinion, enforced by the old men, who act as custodians of the heritage of the clan. The authority of the old men is backed, in turn, by the *wänjärr*, the totemic ancestors themselves, whose edicts are enforced by the threat of supernatural sanctions.

There is no individual ownership of land. Land ownership is vested in the clan as the hereditary group, and as this is a *patrilineal*[10] society, a man is born into his father's clan and has hunting rights over the territory of his own clan and generally over that of several others, particularly that

[9] The arbitrary use of the term *Murngin*, "tribe", for the people of Eastern Arnhem Land, which was introduced by Professor W. Lloyd Warner (*A Black Civilisation*; New York and London, 1937) is particularly unfortunate, for as was pointed out (footnote 5) east of Cape Stewart in North Central Arnhem Land tribal organisation is conspicuous by its absence from the intricate social organisation of the area, although it appears again at Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria, and occurs along the Roper River. The word *murngin* has nothing to do with social organisation, and is in no sense the name of a "tribe".

[10] Descent, among the aborigines, in family, clan and certain other hereditary groups, is reckoned either in the male line, i.e. through the father, in which case it is called *patrilineal*, or through the mother, when it is called *matrilineal*.

[423] of his mother, which is known by a distinctive term, *yindi-*
[614] *pulo*, (*yindi*, big). The mother's clan stands in a special
602 relationship, and a man regards its members as his own people. In times of trouble or feud, or during the quarrels about women which rage intermittently, he can be assured of sanctuary there. (*Yindipulo* applies to the mother's clan itself, and to members of the clan collectively.) They take his part in fights and he exercises hunting rights over their
[604] territory as if he belonged to the clan. A special relationship exists between a man and his mother's brother, called *kauwäl* (reciprocal term *wäkku*), who is a member of the mother's clan. This man is regarded as "like a mother" and he remains a special friend and ally throughout life.

594 In Arnhem Land the most important unit of social life
614 is the family, the group which consists of a man, his wife or wives and their children. The family unit however lies outside the clan organisation, for the clan is a group whose members are either bound by ties of kinship and the bond of descent from a common totemic ancestor or by a belief that they share this bond, and they are
614 also linked by the possession of totems in common. And
621 since the people are patrilineal and the clan group is *exogamous*[11]—that is, a man may not marry a woman of the same clan—the group which actually *occupies* the clan territory is made up of the male members of the clan and their children, *plus* their wives (who remain members of other clans—the clans into which they were born), and *minus* those female members of the clan who have married into other clans. To this occupational group the name "horde" is applied. The clan is an hereditary
[597] group, entry into which is by birth alone, but a person may enter a horde by marriage or by adoption. The *clan* is a permanent and stable unit of social organisation; the

[11] See footnote 7 (page 10), on the dual division and exogamy.

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
O117 Murngin O117

GLOSSARY

Clan. The clan (not "tribe") is the most important permanent unit of social life in Arnhem Land. It is an aggregation of families, the members of which are linked together by the possession of totems in common and the belief that they are all linked together by descent from a common ancestor or ancestors. Entry into the clan is by birth alone. The clan group is comprised of a man and all his relations in the male line (since the people are *patrilineal*), i.e. his father, father's brothers and father's sisters, his own brothers and sisters and his sons and daughters and all the children of the male members of the clan. The clan is exogamous, that is, a man may not marry within his own clan. This means that the group which at any time *occupies* a clan territory actually consists of the male members of the clan and their children, including their daughters who are not yet married, as well as women who are members of other clans and who have married men of the clan, minus those women of the clan who have married into other clans and gone to live with their husbands. For this functional, *occupational*, group, the name *horde* is used (see below). The clan is the heredity land-owning group, but the war-making group is generally the horde.

Classificatory system of relationship. The kinship system of the Australian aborigines is known as "*classificatory*" because it extends indefinitely the relationships set up by the family by applying the terms which a man uses for his own kin to a large number of people with whom no actual genetic relationship can be traced and whom we should not call relatives at all. Thus a man uses the term which he applies to his own father not only for his father's brothers, but also for all the people whom in the widest sense, his father calls "brother". In this way the family system is extended indefinitely and groups together with own kin, not only all the members of a man's own clan, but also all the people he meets in the normal course of his life. When he knows what term he applies to a man he knows how he should behave to him and also what his obligations are.